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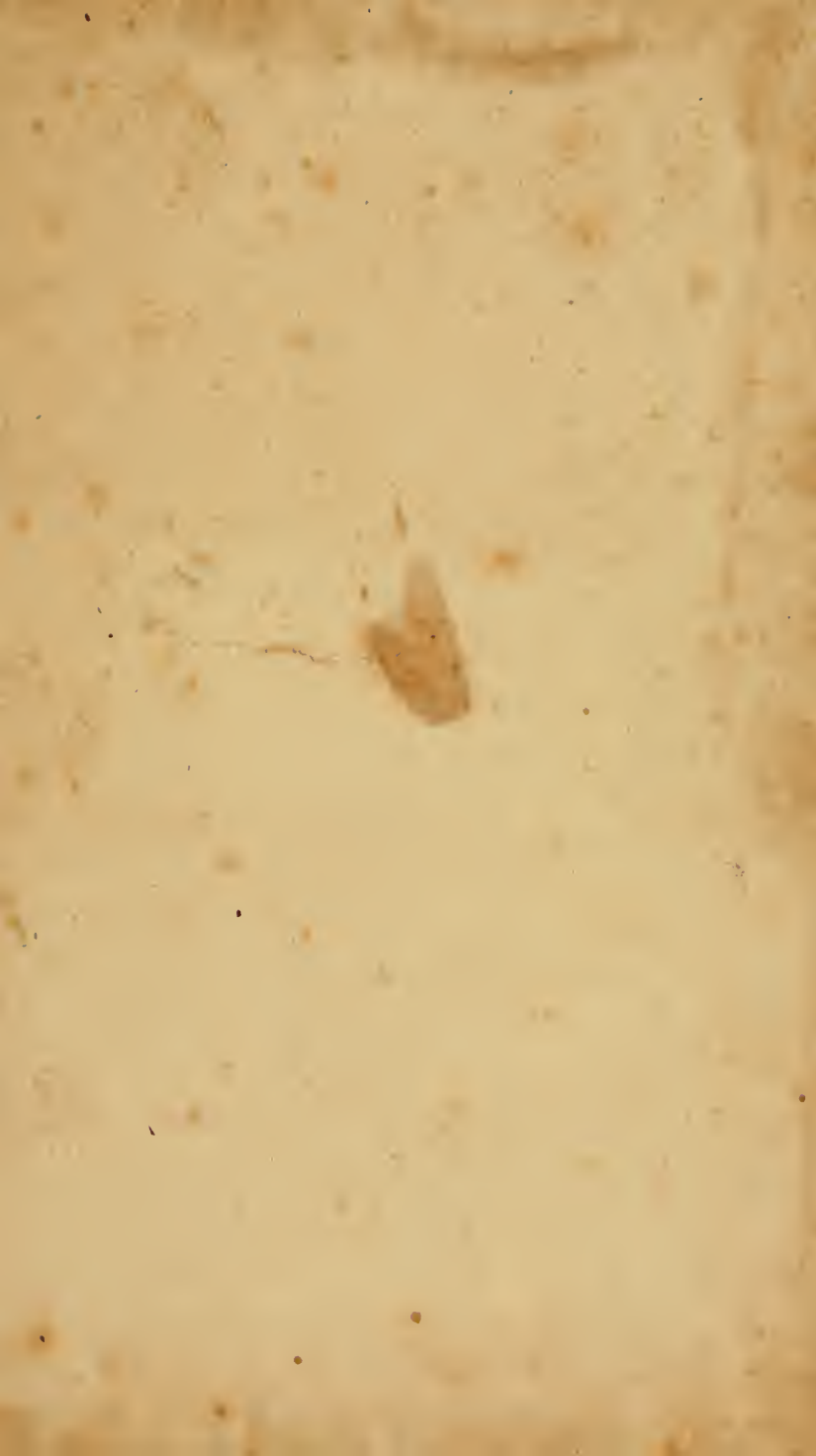
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S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH

OF

His Excellency Dewitt Clinton,

LATE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

PREACHED IN

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, N. Y.

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1828.



BY THE REV. JAMES MILNOR, D.D.

RECTOR OF SAID CHURCH.



PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE VESTRY OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.



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1828.

MONDAY MORNING, FEB. 25, 1823.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

THE undersigned, having heard with the highest gratification and pleasure, the Sermon delivered by you yesterday morning, feel it a duty to acknowledge their sense of the judicious and happy manner in which you treated so delicate a subject.

Desirous of extending the benefit of this valuable production to those who had not the privilege of being present at its delivery, and convinced that it would be to them a most acceptable favour, we are induced, as members of Vestry, to request a copy of the same for publication,

We are, dear Sir,

Your very sincere friends,

JAMES D. L. WALTON,
EDM. MOREWOOD,
R. WARDELL,
HUBERT VAN WAGENEN,
THOMAS BLOODGOOD.
JOHN STEARNS,
THOMAS S. TOWNSEND.
WM. SHATZELL,
JAMES A. BURTUS,
JOHN H. HILL.

REV. DR. JAMES MILNOR.

GENTLEMEN,

The promptitude and unanimity with which you have requested a copy of the Sermon preached by me yesterday in St. George's Church are grateful to my feelings, as an expression of your approbation of a well intended, but feeble, tribute to the memory of our late excellent Governor.

Although very sensible how far below the merits of its subject, this hasty attempt has fallen, I cannot refuse the call of the official representatives of my beloved people, for its publication, and therefore commit it to your disposal.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,
and affectionate pastor,

JAMES MILNOR.

MESSRS. JAMES D. L. WALTON, &c.

Churchwardens and Vestrymen of St. George's Church.

FEBRUARY, 25, 1823.

SERMON.

ROMANS, XIII. *part of 7th verse.*

“RENDER, THEREFORE, TO ALL THEIR DUES—HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR.”

THE kingdom of Christ is not of this world. It is spiritual; and the place of its erection is in the hearts of men. It outlives the limited term of human existence on earth, and its objects transcend in dignity, as in duration, all the inferior, transitory, concerns of the present scene.

Yet the subjects of Christ's government, while they owe a paramount allegiance to Him, and are principally concerned in rendering obedience to his laws, in extending his hallowed empire in the world, and in preparing to exult with all his faithful people in the final triumph of their heavenly king, are also the subjects or citizens of various civil governments, and amenable to human laws. And, therefore, in that complete directory of religious, moral, and social duty, presented in the sacred Scriptures, the relative obligations of those invested with the office of rulers, and of those who are subject to their sway, are delineated and urged with a clearness and force, alike calculated, on the

one hand, to maintain the claims of just authority, and on the other to promote the safety and happiness of the people.

Do we desire to know what should be the character of men elevated to official stations in the civil community? We are told, they should be "able men ; such as fear God ; men of truth, hating covetousness." Do we desire to know in what manner they should discharge their official functions? We are told, they are "not to wrest judgment ;" that their conduct is to be marked by the strictest rectitude and impartiality, not regarding the persons of men, having no undue respect to the poor, nor "honouring," to the subversion of justice. "the persons of the mighty." They are cautioned "not to take a gift," that is, to avoid that bribery and corruption which so effectually, "blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous," and to fulfil all their duties "in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart."

Nor are the obligations of the governed less luminously detailed and enforced. Legitimate government is to have their firm, united, and cordial support. "Every soul is to be subject unto the higher powers," and "he who resists them" is declared to "resist the ordinance of God." Being "sent of Him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well," those under their rule are required to be "subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake." "To Cæsar," our Lord

himself requires to be “rendered the things that are Cæsar’s.” St. Paul rebukes, with severity, in the verses preceding the text, a rebellious spirit; and, in the peaceable temper of the Gospel, in the passage immediately before us, he calls on his fellow Christians, even under the arbitrary government of Nero, to “render unto all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.”

These counsels, rightly understood, are entitled to our unfeigned respect, our unreluctant conformity; and there can be no impropriety, on suitable occasions, in a proper spirit, and with a worthy end, to our making such injunctions as the foregoing the themes of public observation and enforcement. They may have been sometimes prostituted to purposes alien from their original design; but it is a circumstance honourable to our holy religion, that, while it is mainly concerned about the interests of the soul, and of eternity, it is not unmindful of those connected with the present life, and provides ample and intelligent directions, primarily in regard to our duties to God, but subordinately in regard to every social human relation, both public and private.

Occupied, therefore, as it undoubtedly becomes the ministers of Christ to be, in preaching the truths of his everlasting Gospel; and rarely as it may be expedient for them to bring subjects of a secular aspect before the people of their charge; yet there are occasions when topics of this kind may be suitably

noticed. God forbid, that the pulpit should ever be the vehicle of party feelings, or the sacred functions of the ministry be prostituted to an engagement in the fluctuating politics of the day. It is hoped a sense of the dignity of their office, and the responsibilities to which they stand pledged, will preserve the ambassadors of Christ from thus debasing their commission. If there should be any found willing so to dishonour their high and holy calling, I am persuaded, they would soon reap their merited reward in the unqualified condemnation of all the considerate and good. Still, however, every divine precept, whether it regard the destinies of eternity, or the inferior interests of time; whether it involve the homage due to the Almighty Ruler of all, or the obedience and respect due to those who are called in his Providence to preside over the affairs of men, may, in its turn, be used for public edification, and applied to profitable use.

There have been times when that injunction of Paul to Titus has been seasonably urged in the sacred desk;—"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey Magistrates;" and there have been times, when unrighteous and oppressive rulers have been addressed on the wickedness of their conduct, with a holy boldness, such as Paul himself exhibited before the tribunals of Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; or as Peter, and the other Apostles evinced, when the hand of tyranny would have stopped them in their course of duty; but they

firmly declared, "we ought to obey God rather than men."

In our free and happy country there is indeed, in general, very infrequent occasions for the interference of the Ministers of Christ in any matters that the most scrupulous conscience or the most fastidious taste would deem an infringement on their peculiar functions. The people of our land are virtually their own rulers. No hereditary claims to official dignity, or political authority, here exist. These are recognized only in the persons of those on whom the people have bestowed them. Our legislatures are controlled in the enactment of laws by limits prescribed in written constitutions. At short stated periods they surrender their powers back into the hands of those from whom they were received, to be rewarded, if faithful, by their renewal; to sink into the rank of private citizens, if a discerning public disapprove their measures. The highest executive officer holds his station by no more permanent a tenure. He is alike amenable to the people, and liable to be called to a relinquishment of his honours on the constitutional expression of the public will. That caprice, rather than exact wisdom, should sometimes influence the judgment of a tribunal so variously constituted, is to be expected from the weakness and fallibility of man: But, with all its unavoidable defects, never was there a plan promising a greater measure of the blessings of a good government, than that under which a gra-

scious Providence has cast our lot. Never was there a more efficient restraint on an inordinate spirit of ambition, or a desire of arbitrary power, than this resistless accountability of our public officers; nor a more powerful security for the preservation of our liberties, civil and religious, than the ever recurring exercise of the right of unbiassed suffrage on the part of the people.

Brethren, I pray you to excuse allusions, which, I confess, would in general be more proper at other seasons, and in other places, than the present. But, when contemplating the distressing public bereavement just sustained, in the sudden removal of our late illustrious Chief Magistrate, it seemed impossible not to think and to speak of institutions with which he was so long connected, which he loved so dearly, and in the conduct of which he was so distinguished and patriotic an agent. When mourning over such a loss, we may derive an admissible solace of our grief, and a motive for uncomplaining submission to the will of God, in our remaining blessings. Yes, brethren, in the midst of our regrets, we will forbear to render that honour which is most justly due to the memory of our departed ruler, until we have poured forth to Him who "divides to the nations their inheritance, and sets the bounds of the people," the overflowings of our gratitude, for his unnumbered benefactions.

In the apprehension of all who believe, as does your preacher, in a special Providence, ever actively

employed in the affairs of men, this is the true method of fulfilling the precept in the text.

The first tribute of Honour is due to God for our temporal, no less than our spiritual, mercies. To wisdom imparted from above we owe our admirable frame of civil government, and the equal laws which have emanated from the exercise of its legislative powers. To the protecting care of our watchful and Almighty Guardian we stand indebted, that the adversary of our race has not been permitted to incite in the minds of public functionaries, of any political designation, a disposition to invade the rights of the people on the one hand, or to withhold, on the other, a fearless exercise of the powers intrusted to their charge ; that our various tribunals are seen administering Justice with laudable wisdom, purity and mildness ; that we have known so little of the tumult, and so few of the other evils, sometimes attendant upon popular elections ; that the supports of our civil and religious privileges continue solid and immoveable ; that our community is favoured with a most extraordinary exemption from oppressive pecuniary burthens ; and that such an immense amount of intellect and exertion are, from year to year, employed in countless measures of internal improvement ; while abroad our country and its institutions are every where advancing in the estimation of the wise and good, and the American name becoming a praise among the nations of the earth.

Nor dare we overlook, nay we will record with livelier feelings of devout gratitude and praise, that grand moral machinery which the Spirit of Jehovah has put in operation, and his Providence is carrying on throughout our land, for the alleviation of human misery; for the education of the poorer classes; for advancing the interests of science and literature; for spreading abroad the hallowed influence of revealed truth, by means of Missionaries, Bibles, Tracts, and Sabbath School instruction; and for sending forth to the most distant nations of the earth, the light of that blessed faith, on which are staked all the immortal interests of man.

Does it not become the beneficiaries of blessings such as these to render the honour that is due to their great Bestower? “Truly he hath not dealt so with any nation.” “O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to us children of men.” “Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits.”

Nor let our praise expend itself in empty words. While with our mouths we confess the God, who “rules in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,” as the author and giver of all our good things, let us manifest the sincerity of our offerings of praise, for sincerity alone can give them value, by consecrating our hearts to his service, by cherishing a true faith in the rich mercies of redemption through his crucified Son, and by

living habitually under the influence of that holy religion, from which all our other blessings derive their hope of perpetuity, without which they would soon be transformed into a curse. "Let us," I repeat, in the language of our Apostle, "render unto all their dues:" and in doing so, never forget that our first, and greatest, and most enduring tribute belongs to God.

But the plans of Omnipotence are achieved by human instruments; and it is not inconsistent with the paramount claims of God to honour those whom He so highly honours, as to constitute them the agents of his benefactions to mankind. To those whom He employs to accomplish his designs of goodness, if faithful in the discharge of the functions committed to their trust, a subordinate measure of gratitude and respect is justly due. They deserve to be honoured while they live; and when they die, a nation's tears may well bedew their graves, and grateful memory delight to perpetuate their fame.

The remark is true in the most general sense. The occasion calls for its special application to such as have occupied distinguished public stations. And we do not hesitate to say, that to such a tribute of respect is due; that to render it is consonant with the apostolic precept in our text; and, so long as it exceeds not the merits of its subject, and derogates not from the superior reverence we owe to God, it contravenes no principle of our holy faith. It is but

the payment of a well-earned debt, to praise the man whose ambition has employed itself in great, and excellent, and useful objects. It is not to the idle incumbent of hereditary honours; it is not to the man raised to distinction by base and treacherous artifice, or lawless force; it is not to one mistakenly elevated to a rank, which he disgraces by arrogance and pride, we are called to render honour; but to the honest statesman, rising into public favour by inherent worth, and patriotic effort, and constantly employing his distinguished talents to the public good; and to the memory of such a man we would advocate, without the smallest scruple, a munificent return of public gratitude and praise. Flattery, the character of our holy religion, and of our civil institutions alike forbid. But where history has already recorded evidences of personal and official worth which time cannot obliterate, nor ingratitude itself deface, there can be no offence in eulogy.

Such is the case of that illustrious man whom we have seen, with awful suddenness, cut down in the midst of his days, and of a career of public usefulness in which few would venture to present themselves as his competitors. We can say of Dewitt Clinton, not in the sycophantic spirit of Tertullus to Felix, but in the chastened soberness of truth, that "by him we have enjoyed great quietness, and by his providence very worthy deeds have been done to our whole nation." Then let us give his memory its due. Let us render honour to whom honour

justly appertains. It is doing homage to virtue itself to honour its possessor, and well deserved commendation of the dead may assist to excite the living to a noble emulation of his bright example.

It is in this view, and under such impressions, that I feel a glow of grateful satisfaction, mingled with no ordinary sensibility, in according my feeble tribute of respect to the memory of the distinguished Chief Magistrate of whom our State has been bereaved. The events in which he bore a conspicuous part will fill a large place in the history of our Country; and some faithful biographer, of talents commensurate to his noble subject, will hand down the name of CLINTON to the admiration of a late posterity.

In this place little more can be done than just to glance at a few of those prominent features of his character and life, to which more competent hands will hereafter give the illustration and expansion they deserve.

Our late Chief Magistrate occupied in the literary world the acknowledged reputation of a fine SCHOLAR. On the foundation laid in his Collegiate course, his excellent natural abilities, and regular habits of study, enabled him to rear a superstructure of a brilliant order. Of the variety and extent of his knowledge, the various topics, which, in succession, occupied his pen, and the rich current of his daily conversation, furnished decisive proofs. The many excellent institutions of our City and State, which he fostered with his patronage, and de-

lighted with his communications, evince his love for literature, science, and the arts ; and his interesting messages at the annual Sessions of the Legislature, since he has filled the Governmental Chair, besides the exhibition of great acquaintance with the subjects they embraced, exhibit models of pure and classic composition.

He was a distinguished **CIVILIAN AND STATESMAN**. Fully versed in the principles of political economy, and public law, to the republican Constitutions of our Country his native love of liberty gave the best affections of his heart, as the most powerful bulwarks against its invasion. His intimate knowledge of the resources of the nation, and of this member of it in particular, his almost intuitive perception of the most eligible plans for drawing them forth, at the cheapest rates, into the most efficient practical use, his minute and experimental information, especially as to the best means of enriching the community by the facilities of inland water communication, are subjects of commendation acknowledged by all. His accurate foresight of the happy result, which, thank God, he lived long enough to witness, gave a spring to the employment of his strong intellect on this novel subject, and imparted vigour and perseverance in the prosecution of his views. The great works, in the planning and execution of which he bore so pre-eminent a part, will be an enduring monument to his praise, and a grateful posterity will concede to his memory that of many

other undertakings of a similar character, which the present generation, or the next, under the smiles of a favouring Providence, will not fail to see accomplished. This is not the place for enlarging on that great variety of evidence which the public life of Mr. Clinton afforded, of his talents as a statesman ; but it would be unjust not to add, that he was a *patriotic statesman*. Public utility and the people's happiness were the unremitting and disinterested aim of all his studies and exertions. He leaves no inheritance to his mourning family, but his virtues and his fame.

He was too, in the best sense, a PHILANTHROPIST. His bosom expanded to the generous character of the age. His range of mind, his moral sense, his warmth of feeling, carried him beyond a contemplation of the mere physical wealth and prosperity of the community in which he lived. He looked with intense anxiety to its growth in intellectual and moral grandeur. The more elevated seats of learning had his unqualified approval and support : But he considered our Common Schools as the great engines of popular improvement. In them a large proportion of the young and rising generation of the commonwealth were to receive their preparation for future usefulness. The competent maintenance, and multiplication and good conduct of these schools were therefore to him delightful objects of official and personal regard. His incessant exertions in their promotion will never be forgotten, so long as

knowledge and virtue continue to be thought the best safeguards of liberty, and its attendant blessings.

The melioration of our penal code, and the discipline of our prisons owe much of their present excellence to his indefatigable efforts. But he viewed the prevention of crime as more desirable than its punishment, and the reformation of the offender as more humane and profitable than his excision. He saw especially in the universal diffusion of the lights of learning and religion, for he desired to see them indissolubly united, the best means of accomplishing the first of these objects. He was no visionary Philosopher. He amused himself with no dreams of social, or individual, perfectability. He beheld man as a fallen, helpless, being, and with no more than a suitable regard to human agency in the developement and application of those collateral instrumentalities for his improvement, which the goodness of God had placed within his reach, it was in the religion of Jesus Christ that he believed were centered the only adequate securities for the happiness, and best interests of man in his present, or future state of being.

In this divine system he avowed both publicly and privately his firm belief: And, hence, he was ever ready to give the weight of his personal, and where it was proper his official sanction, to its institutions. Yes; amidst the clamours of infidelity Clinton shrunk not from the avowal of his attach-

ment to Christianity ; and though immersed in the varied cares of public life, he found a pleasure in affording his countenance and aid to the diffusion of its influence.

Of that noble institution, the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, he was long an honoured Vice-President ; and on more than one occasion greatly added to the interest of its anniversaries by occupying the place of its venerable President, the illustrious Jay, prevented by the infirmities of age from gratifying the Society, and the public by his presence.

At its very last annual meeting, in an address, which the Society will delight to preserve on their records, as a memorial of their lamented patron, he pronounced "its end" to be "celestial." "It looks down," said he, "on man for his good, and it looks up to heaven for its blessing. It reverses the dreams of heathen mythology, and extends upwards the everlasting chain, which binds together the earth and the heavens. Like a shining Pharos on a tempest-beaten promontory, it sends forth a saving light, which carries us securely through the storms that agitate our bark on the ocean of time. With such high destinies, with such exalted ends, who would not afford," he exclaimed, "the means of its preservation and perpetuation, and apply to its concerns the most energetic exertions of liberality and wisdom. There is nothing," he added, "in the elements, in the composition, or in the administration of the Society, which ought to alarm the jealousy,

or excite the suspicion of the most rigid sectarian, in religion, or politics. It was founded, and has been supported, by men of all creeds. It looks with an equal eye on all the humble followers of Christ; and it distributes, with an equal hand, the benefits which spring from its bosom. It acknowledges no superiority, but the superiority of piety and wisdom, and it admits of no distinctions, but those which grow out of the improvement of human character. If its pedestal be upon earth, its apex reaches the heavens.”

In the same address he took an inspiring view of the events of the present day, as demonstrating, with irresistible force, the superintending Providence of God; of their effect in enabling the new world to reflect back the light which had been radiated upon her from the old; and of the importance of giving a right direction to that archimedian lever, the press, by “infusing the principles of our holy religion into the movements of a power so mighty and transcendent:” declaring with solemnity, his persuasion, that “systems of general education, and a diffusive spread of Bible Societies were necessary for the tranquillity, good order, and liberties of mankind.”

Instead of offering an apology for the length of these quotations, on a subject of such deep interest, I will honour the memory of our deceased fellow labourer in this sacred cause, and its kindred objects, and encourage the hearts of its numerous friends now before me, by one other passage, which,

I pray God, may prove prophetic. "We are," said he "on the verge of events greater than the astonishing ones, which have occurred within our times; discoveries vast and stupendous. Institutions deeply connected with human melioration, and events of unprecedented character may be expected. The fountains of intellectual, moral, and religious light, which are now concentrated within comparatively narrow boundaries, will overflow the World; and humanity, throwing off its fetters, and rising above its incumbrances, will be ennobled, as well as disenthralled." You are all ready, I trust, Christian Brethren, to respond a hearty Amen to these joyful and scriptural anticipations.

Time would fail to enumerate all the literary, religious, and benevolent enterprises, in which Mr. Clinton was associated.

Of Sunday Schools he was a feeling advocate. He has often, and earnestly, recommended them to the support and patronage of the Christian public, and was rejoiced to attend their anniversary exhibitions. Speaking of that of the last year in this city, he said, the sight of the procession of the thousands of children of which it was composed, the pupils of Sabbath Schools, was "irresistibly calculated to excite the tenderest sympathies of our nature;" and expressed his wish, that past success might teach their supporters, "the imperative obligation to act well their parts, and anticipate more momentous results."

Missionary and Tract Societies had also his decided approbation, and efficient countenance; and he publicly expressed his earnest interest in the institutions of the respectable denomination to which he was attached, for assisting destitute pious young men in their preparation for the Ministry.

You perceive, that I have rather sought to state facts than employ myself in vague eulogy on that part of Mr. Clinton's character, which gives it a peculiar claim to notice in this place: And may I not call on those who have enjoyed personal intercourse with our beloved Chief Magistrate, or have witnessed his public communications, to testify, how meekly he bore his well earned distinctions, and what unaffected diffidence marked his whole demeanour; so that while, on the latter occasions, all regarded him as first among the throng, he seemed to think himself the least.

In his private relations Mr. Clinton's character was such, as to make his loss too great to his family, even for a nation's gratitude to supply. May the mourning widow, and the bereaved children look to a higher source for the consolation which they need. May they find it in the bosom of that benignant Being, who has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, and in the animating hopes of that blessed Book, which was believed in and loved by their departed protector and friend.

In closing my remarks on the character of this

distinguished man, I wish it not to be inferred that it was faultless. Exemption from frailty, and infirmity, nay from sin, is not the attribute of mortal man; but that, in public and private life, his faults were obscured in the constellation of his virtues, will be admitted by those who observed him most, and knew him best. Future generations, in the review of his well told life, will acknowledge, that few men have lived so free from merited imputation, in his retired or official course; few were ever followed to the grave with such universal, undissembled, poignant grief.

I have finished my intended observations on the character of the great man whose death has inflicted so signal a calamity on our State and Country. I would not have so occupied your time, had I not deemed all that I have said, a just, though very feeble, tribute to departed worth; one which your own estimate of its subject required to be rendered; one which, in letter and spirit, is a compliance with the apostolic precept in the text, "render to all their dues—honour to whom honour;" one which would involve no infringement on the sanctity of this day or place, or the excitement of a single feeling connected with public controversies, which, as they have long ceased to agitate the bosom of your preacher, will never find a place in his public communications.

I am free to confess my concurrence generally in the objections that have been made to the introduc-

tion of such subjects into the pulpit unadvisedly or lightly ; while I see not their application to such a case as that which has now employed us. I deprecate the alliance of Church and State, of which in this country there does not exist, as I believe, the remotest danger. I would, as promptly as any man, deny the obligation of obedience to the mandates of the civil authority, in regard to the performance of ministerial duty ; and, even in the case of a respectful request such as that made, I have no doubt from the purest motives, in the present instance, by the constituted authorities of the City, I would claim the right of determining for myself on the propriety and expediency of a compliance. But it is extremely difficult for me to see, why a man's having occupied a public station should exclude his memory from a mark of respect, which, I presume, all will admit, may sometimes be properly and profitably rendered to our departed friends. Such notices of men, whose lives have been distinguished by public usefulness, are not novelties, either in this country or abroad. Our libraries are full of memorials of this kind ; and the only apology I can make for the present, is a repetition of my solemn conviction, that, if it were ever proper, it is so in regard to the illustrious individual, taken from the arms of his country by so sudden and unlooked for a dispensation of God's providence, and for whom a whole community is this day clothed in the habiliments of mourning.

A few words of improvement, and I will no longer trespass on your patience.

1. Let those who are called to fill exalted and influential places in society, behold, in the bright example before them, the compatibility of religion and benevolence, and of an active engagement in their promotion, with the highest eminence of station. Who will aver that the public honours of Mr. Clinton were in the slightest degree tarnished, or his influence impaired, or his happiness abridged, by the employment of a portion of his time and talents in the promotion of moral and religious education, in the circulation of the inspired Book of God, in the preparation in learning of young men destined to become the public Teachers of Christianity, in the diffusion by missions and tracts, both at home and abroad, of its glorious doctrines and inimitable precepts, and even in that last charitable object of his enlarged mind, so humble in its appearance, but promising to be so blessed in its results, the establishment of Infant Schools. God grant, that in greater numbers than at present, our public characters, and our men of wealth and influence, may be found imitating his honourable example.

2. Let us learn from this unlooked for providence, the precarious tenure by which we hold our choicest blessings. We fancied that in our late Chief Magistrate we had much good treasured up for many years. Not a few of those whose minds are occupied in public affairs, were hoping to see his sphere

of usefulness yet more enlarged ; and his vigorous and comprehensive intellect employed, not for the State merely, but the Nation. In a moment the least expected we have had a solemn demonstration of the uncertainty of all earthly good. We have been painfully taught how easily divine Omnipotence can frustrate human expectation ; that man may see “ vanity ” inscribed on his richest treasures, and possessions ; and learn, that there is no dependence for indestructible happiness but in the favour of God, and the hopes inspired by true religion. “ As for man, his days are as grass ; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth ; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

3. Let us, under this, and every affliction, learn quiet and unmurmuring submission to the will of God. “ He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and giveth not account of any of his matters.” “ His ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts.” Yet, when the mysteries of his Providence shall be unravelled, as they will be in the great day, which is to determine the final destiny of all men, it will infallibly appear, that “ the Judge of all the earth hath done right.” Let no present obscurity lead us to doubt, either the wisdom, or the goodness, of his providential dispensations. What we “ know not now, we shall know hereafter.” One thought however merits our attention. Nations and States, as well as individuals are sometimes subjected to the chastening rod of the

Almighty for their sins. While we of this community bow submissively under this most afflictive stroke, it becomes us all, and more especially our rulers, to consider, whether it be not wise to avert further judgments by erecting new bulwarks against the inroads of licentiousness, and the desolating progress of vice and immorality: For, surely, there can be no promise of permanent security and happiness to any people, who allow, where it is in their power to prevent, the violation of God's laws.

Lastly; let this disastrous instance of the uncertainty of life teach us all, "so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom." Death spares neither rank, nor age. The efforts of this whole community, had it been possible, would have been put in requisition, to preserve the existence of him whose loss we lament. But "there is no discharge in this war." "The days of man are determined. The number of his months are with the Lord. He hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." In the awful suddenness of this event, let us see the urgent necessity of habitual preparation for death. Time and opportunity for that special preparation, on which so many vainly calculate, it may be the pleasure of God, as the punishment of procrastination, to deny us. Let us, then, disarm death of his terrors, by at once turning to God with full purpose of

heart. Repentance for sin, and faith in the sacrifice of Christ, attested by undissembled holiness of life, will not fail to draw down the pardoning mercy of God, invest us with the sweet enjoyment of inward peace, and prepare us for a blissful eternity.

